

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

051257Z Mar 02

CONFIDENTIAL PTO7233

PAGE 01 HARARE 00574 070037Z
ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	COR-01	NP-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	EUR-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01	VCE-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	SSO-00	SS-00	USIE-00	IIP-00	DSCC-00
	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/004W			
				-----7095E4	070038Z	/38	

FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1099
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PRIORITY
OAU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 000574

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - ADDED CLASSIFICATION REASON

FOR AF/FO: A/S KANSTEINER AND AF/S
NSC FOR AFRICA SR ADVISER FRAZER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2012
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: UNCERTAINTY HEADING INTO ELECTIONS

REF: HARARE 416

(U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR JOSEPH SULLIVAN FOR REASON 1.5 (D)
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 HARARE 00574 070037Z

1.(C) THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS HAVE BRED INCREASED UNCERTAINTY AMONG MOST OBSERVERS REGARDING THE LIKELY ELECTION OUTCOME. THE ONLY CREDIBLE PUBLISHED POLL BY THE MASS PUBLIC OPINION POLL FROM A JANUARY STRATIFIED SAMPLE SURVEY SHOWED MDC WITH A TWO TO ONE MARGIN AMONG VOTERS EXPRESSING A PREFERENCE, WITH ALMOST 60 PER CENT DECLINING TO REVEAL THEIR INTENTIONS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT A PRIVATE GOVERNMENT POLL ALSO SHOWED PRESIDENT MUGABE TRAILING BY A NARROWER MARGIN OF THE LOW 50 PER CENT TO HIGH 40 PER CENT RANGE.

2.(C) NOTWITHSTANDING THE ABOVE, ZANU-PF INSIDERS ARE PRIVATELY EXPRESSING GREATER CONFIDENCE IN RECENT WEEKS OVER THE LIKELY ELECTION OUTCOME AND THEIR PROSPECTS OF MAINTAINING POWER. PART OF THIS CONFIDENCE COMES FROM WHAT THEY FEEL HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL MOBILIZATION OF THEIR RURAL VOTER BASE AND SUBSTANTIAL INTIMIDATION OF POTENTIAL MDC VOTERS IN RURAL AREAS AND OTHER AREAS WHERE MDC SUPPORT IS NOT OVERWHELMING. THERE ARE ALSO CREDIBLE REPORTS OF VOTE MANIPULATION, PARTICULARLY WITH MILITARY BALLOTS, LAST-MINUTE ADDITIONS TO THE VOTER ROLLS ONLY IN AREAS OF ZANU-PF STRENGTH AND IN THE MOST RURAL VOTING PRECINCTS AND WITH MOBILE POLLING STATIONS. IN ADDITION, THE MDC HAS BEEN FRUSTRATED IN ITS CAMPAIGN BY POLICE OR ZANU-PF MOB PREVENTION OF SCORES OF OPPOSITION RALLIES. MOREOVER, EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY TO HOLD DOWN THE TURNOUT IN AREAS OF MDC STRENGTH -- URBAN AREAS AND MATABELELAND THROUGH DELAY IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF POLLING PLACES AND REDUCTION OF POLLING STATIONS IN URBAN AREAS. ITS MUCH HYPED UNVEILING OF THE ALLEGED
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 HARARE 00574 070037Z
ASSASSINATION PLOT BY MDC CANDIDATE TSVANGIRAI ALSO PLEASES ZANU-PF. WHILE WE DOUBT THAT THE CONSPIRACY ACCOUNT HAS CHANGED MANY VOTES, IT HAS RAISED FEARS AMONG SOME MDC SUPPORTERS THAT, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, TSVANGIRAI WILL NEVER BE ALLOWED TO COME TO POWER,

SIPDIS
THEREBY DISCOURAGING MDC SUPPORTERS FROM VOTING.

13. (C) AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL, MDC'S CHANCES IMPROVE, DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE TURNOUT. GIVEN THE EXTENT OF ZANU-PF VOTE MANIPULATION, LIMITATIONS IMPOSED ON OPPOSITION CAMPAIGNING AND USE OF THE STATE RADIO AND TELEVISION, AND CONTINUING TARGETED INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE, A VERY HIGH VOTER TURNOUT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE OPPOSITION TO OVERCOME THE ABOVE HANDICAPS. FOR THE MDC TO PREVAIL, IT COULD TAKE 80 PER CENT OR MORE TURNOUT, A PARTICIPATION RATE THAT WAS ANTICIPATED IN THE JANUARY OPINION POLL, BUT WHICH COULD DIMINISH DUE TO OBSTACLES PLACED IN THE WAY OF PARTICIPATION IN MDC AREAS OF STRENGTH. EVEN WITH A

VERY HIGH TURNOUT, AN MDC MARGIN OF VICTORY WOULD LIKELY BE FAIRLY NARROW, GIVEN THE COUNTERVAILING FACTORS AT PLAY. ALTERNATIVELY WITH A LOWER TURNOUT, ZANU-PF COULD WELL PREVAIL DUE TO THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF ITS STRENGTH IN RURAL AREAS, INTIMIDATION OF OPPOSITION ACTIVITY AND VOTE MANIPULATION. WE DO NOT THINK IT LIKELY THAT ZANU-PF CAN WIN BY A LARGE MARGIN. THERE IS SUFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR THE OPPOSITION AND ARE SUFFICIENT CHECKS IN THE VOTING AND COUNTING SYSTEM TO PREVENT WHOLESALE MANIPULATION OF THE COUNT.

14. (C) ANOTHER REASON FOR GREATER ZANU-PF CONFIDENCE IS
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 HARARE 00574 070037Z
INCREASED PLANNING FOR HOW THEY CAN PREVENT TSVANGIRAI FROM TAKING OFFICE, EVEN IF HE SHOULD WIN THE VOTE. MANIPULATION OF THE ALLEGED ASSASSINATION PLOT INTO A FORMAL CHARGE OF TREASON IS ONE OBVIOUS ROUTE, BUT WE KNOW THEY ARE THINKING OF OTHER MEANS AS WELL TO SUBVERT A NEGATIVE RESULT. WHETHER THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO EXECUTE SUCH PLANS WOULD DEPEND ON MANY FACTORS, INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO THE RESULTS AND THE WILLINGNESS OF THE ARMED FORCES TO SUPPORT ACTION TO SUBVERT AN ELECTION RESULT IN FAVOR OF THE MDC.

SULLIVAN

CONFIDENTIAL

>